

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA	FORM NO.
	555



wn Lexington
dress 26 Blossom Street
storic Name Underwood-Smith-Hutchinson
use _____

e: Present residential
Original residential

DESCRIPTION:

te first half of eighteenth century

Source stylistic analysis

Style Early Second Period *Georgian*

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric artificial siding

Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) see

Architectural Significance _____

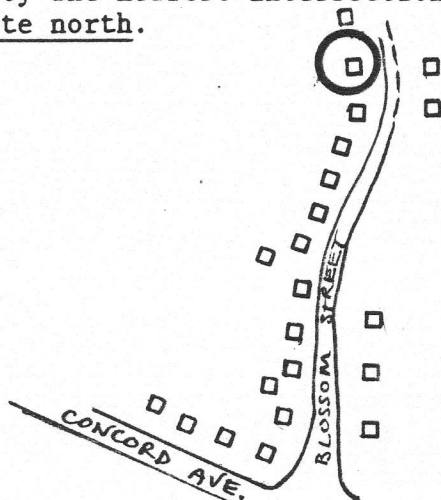
Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage 66256 ft.²

Setting At end of dead end street next
to a major six-lane highway; near recent
houses; backs onto prominent hill.

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Grady and Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date March, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

Although altered and enlarged many times, the earliest portions of this house appear to date from the first half of the eighteenth century. Very likely, the house was originally two rooms over two rooms with central chimney and comprised the southernmost rooms of the current house, except for the sunporch.

Evidences of an early Second Period construction date include an inch-wide quarter-round chamfer on beam cases in the right hand chamber, and a

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

According to an antiquarian account, this house was originally owned by Joshua Underwood. This does not readily accord with a construction date in the first half of the eighteenth century, however, for Joshua Underwood was born in 1725, married in 1766, and died in 1775. Perhaps the house was originally built by his father Joseph (1681-at least 1749), but more research is necessary to establish the original ownership of this important house. In any case, it does seem reasonably clear that c. 1760 Joshua Underwood sold the house to Josiah Smith (1724-1784), the ancestor of many of the Smiths in what came to be known as the "Smith's End" part of Lexington, and the brother of Hezekiah Smith on Allen Street, then just a continuation of Blossom Street and part of a major road in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between Lexington and Boston (see Allen Street area and 56 Allen Street forms).

Josiah Smith was a selectman for five years between 1771 and 1777, and an assessor from 1770 to 1773; he served in the Revolution and was a shoemaker. (The 1771 tax list mentions a "cordwainer's shop on his property.") Many of these characteristics were also true of his son Josiah (1753-1826), who bought the farm after his father's death: the second Josiah also fought in the Revolution; was a selectman for four years between 1801 and 1806 and an assessor twice; and was a shoemaker with four to six employees. (His shop, an old schoolhouse, was apparently taken down c. 1888.) In 1817 his son Elias (1792-1878) bought the farm, suggesting a possible date for the Federal "modernization" of the interior. Elias Smith, the brother of "Fifer Si" at

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Hudson, Charles. History of the Town of Lexington, II, pp. 635, 639, 643-644, 646. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

Smith, A. Bradford. "Kite End" (1891). Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society II(1900):112-114.

1889 map

1906 map

1887 Directory

1906 Directory

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Lexington

Form No:

555

Property Name: 26 Blossom Street

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

board and batten door with vertical feather-edged panel and strap hinges also in that chamber. These features place the house among the half a dozen first-half-of-the-eighteenth-century houses extant in Lexington.

An interesting feature of the house is the relatively steep pitch of the front slope of the roof, almost First Period in configuration (the rear slope of the roof has been raised several times). Even though this house sits on one of the earliest roads in Lexington, there is no other evidence that the house was built in the First Period. The roof slope must represent a stylistic holdover. The beams, for example, are rough hewn and were not intended to be exposed as they would have been in the seventeenth century.

Other features consistent with an eighteenth century construction date are brick nogging (seen in the first floor rear wall); roof framing of principal rafters bridle jointed at the apex with a slim purlin at the ridge and two purlins along the slope; obvious early plaster laid on split lath; and splayed corner posts in the chambers.

There have been many changes to the structure. Fenestration and door openings on the south facade have been altered and perhaps moved. Finishes in the rooms on the first floor of the original portion of the house date from the early nineteenth century. The staircase is now in the rear of the house, outside the original structure. There is one chimney at the rear of the right hand room. Its foundation is of a type found elsewhere in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses in Lexington: two brick piers with timbers lain horizontally across them to support the superstructure. (Note: no evidence of the earlier central chimney was found; its presence is just conjectured.)

There have been numerous lateral and rear additions to the house. The rear slope of the roof has been raised twice. Evidence in the attic shows that first a one room deep addition was placed along the rear of the house with lean-to roof extending down to the first floor ceiling height on the north wall. Rafters to support this lean-to are still seen in the east and west walls of the attic laid on top of original rafters to form a lean-to roof with shallower slope. The roof of the lean-to was later raised to accommodate a full two stories in the rear of the house.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

the end of Blossom Street and Ebenezer at 389 Concord Avenue, both also shoemakers (see 272 Concord Avenue and 389 Concord Avenue forms), was first a shoemaker and later a farmer. After his death the farm was purchased by his son A. Bradford (1829-1910), who owned it until 1884 when it was finally sold out of the Smith family for the first time in 124 years. In 1889 the house was owned by Solomon Estabrook, a farmer, and in 1906 by Edwin W. Hutchinson, a market gardener.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom